

**San José State University**  
**Humanities Department**  
**RELS – 145, Middle East Traditions, Fall 2020**

**Course and Contact Information**

Instructor:	Dr. Arthur Zárate
Office Location:	CL 414N
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Email:	arthur.zarate@sjsu.edu
Office Hours:	T/R 10:15am -
Class Days/Time:	TR 9:00am – 10:15am
Classroom:	Online
Prerequisites:	WST, ENGL/LLD 100A, (NOTE: Completion of, or co-registration in, 100W is recommended).
GE/SJSU Studies Category:	Area V

**Course Format**

**Canvas**

This course requires you to access the Canvas Learning Management System. Course materials, including the syllabus, assignments, readings, and more, will be posted on Canvas. Assignments will be handed in via Canvas.

**Course Description**

This course is an introduction to the peoples and cultures of the Middle East through exploration of the cooperation, competition, conflict and dialogues between the ethnic, national, and religious communities of contemporary Middle Eastern countries.

In it we will survey the history, culture, religious traditions, literature, and politics of the region. Topics we will explore include the life and career of the Prophet Muhammad, the historical impact of Islamic civilization upon Western societies, the advent of European colonialism and anticolonial nationalism in the Middle East, the effect of the World Wars and Cold War on the region, the emergence of Zionism, the rise and contemporary prominence of Islamic political and social movements, debates about gender relations and the status of women, the social and economic costs of American military interventions in the Middle East, the so-called “War on Terror,” and contemporary anti-Muslim/anti-Arab racism.

During the course students will engage the key concepts, theories, and problems of the modern academic study of the Middle East. In addition to reading secondary source materials, students will also watch short films and documentaries, as well as read selected primary sources, including the Qur’an, excerpts from the writing of the great classical and postclassical Muslim scholars, the writings of nineteenth and twentieth century Middle Eastern reformers, nationalists, and postcolonial intellectuals.

## **GE Learning Outcomes (GELO)**

Upon successful completion of this course, students shall be able to:

1. compare systematically the ideas, values, images, cultural artifacts, economic structures, technological developments, or attitudes of people from more than one culture outside the U.S. You will be assessed on this in your exams, quizzes your research paper.
2. identify the historical context of ideas and cultural traditions outside the U.S. and how they have influenced American culture. You will be assessed on this in your exams, quizzes your research paper.
3. explain how a culture outside the U.S. has changed in response to internal and external pressures. You will be assessed on this in your exams and quizzes.

## **Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. understand and recognize the historical factors shaping the politics of the contemporary Middle East. You will be assessed on this in your exams and research paper.
2. identify and critically engage the key terms, concepts, and problems of the modern academic study of the Middle East. You will be assessed on this in your exams, research paper, and media assignments.
3. identify and critically assess the significant impact of the U.S. on the societies of the contemporary Middle East. You will be assessed on this in your exams and in your media assignments.
4. understand and critically assess the historical impact of Islamic civilization upon Western societies. You will be assessed on this in your exams.

## **Program Learning Outcomes (For comparative religious studies majors)**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Function adroitly within the interdisciplinary nature of comparative religious studies. Describe how religion, as a phenomenon, can be analyzed historically, philosophically, psychologically, sociologically, geographically, and artistically, as well as theologically. Demonstrate ability to write and speak about religions in a scholarly, civil, and respectful manner, using the academic discourses that have evolved for this purpose. Foster civil discourse about religion by encountering and engaging community members, faculty, and students who hold diverse views within and about religious traditions. You will be assessed on this in your exams and term project paper.

## **Required Texts/Readings**

### **Textbooks**

Jillian Schwedler, ed. *Understanding the Contemporary Middle East*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (2013) (ISBN 9781588269102)

Jonathan Lyons, *The House of Wisdom: How the Arabs Transformed Western Civilization* (2009) (ISBN 9781608190584)

### **Other Readings and Media**

Other reading material and videos will be made available to the students by the instructor on Canvas.

## Technology Requirements

Students are required to have an electronic device (laptop, desktop or tablet) with a camera and built-in microphone. SJSU has a free equipment loan program available for students.

Students are responsible for ensuring that they have access to reliable Wi-Fi during tests. If students are unable to have reliable Wi-Fi, they must inform the instructor, as soon as possible or at the latest one week before the test date to determine an alternative. See Learn Anywhere website for current Wi-Fi options on campus.

## Course Requirements and Assignments

**In-class participation.** Your participation in class will be assessed based on your contribution to classroom discussion. Students will earn up to a point for each constructive comment they make in class for a total of up to four points each week.

**Quizzes.** There will be twelve quizzes to be completed on Canvas, worth ten points each.

**Exams.** There are two take-home open note exams, a midterm and a final. The exams will be of equal value and will follow each of half of the course. Both exams will be completed in a group with other students. Although completed in a group, each student will turn in their own individual unique exam.

**Media Assignments (MAs).** Four Canvas-based responses, worth 10 points each (see course schedule for assignment due dates). Each will require brief, well-written paragraphs in response to electronic media distributed by the professor. (A separate handout describing the assignments in detail will be distributed to students).

**Personal Response Paragraphs (PRPs).** Students are required to participate in discussion by writing eight PRPs on Canvas and commenting on another student's PRP, worth 10 points each. (see course schedule for assignment due dates). Each will require (a) brief, well-written paragraph(s) in answer to (a) question(s) posted by the instructor or on whatever topic you like. (A separate handout describing the assignments in detail will be distributed to students).

**Research Paper.** Students are expected to write a research paper of approximately 2000 words. The paper topic should explore an aspect of the politics, culture, history, or religious traditions of the Middle East. The topic must be selected in consultation with the professor. The selection of a topic occurs once the student submits to the professor an abstract (250 word maximum) of the paper describing what you intend to study and your preliminary thoughts, as well as articulating a clear thesis statement. (A separate handout describing the research paper in detail will be distributed to students).

## Grading Information

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

Grades will be based on performance in each of the six items identified in the chart below. Make-up tests and late assignments will be approved when you can provide documentation of illness or other circumstances beyond your control. Late assignments and papers will lose an entire letter grade each day they are late unless

the student can provide documentation justifying the tardiness. More guidelines on grading information and class attendance can be found from the following two university policies:

- University Syllabus Policy S16-9 (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>)
- University Attendance and Participation Policy F15-12 (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F15-12.pdf>)
- University Grading System Policy F18-5

### Determination of Grades

In-class participation	60 points
Quizzes	120 points
PRPs (8); MAs (4)	120 points
Midterm	75 points
Final	75 points
Research Paper	150 points
<b>Total</b>	<b>600 points</b>

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>A plus</i>	<i>576 to 600</i>	<i>96 to 100%</i>
<i>A</i>	<i>558 to 570</i>	<i>93 to 95%</i>
<i>A minus</i>	<i>540 to 552</i>	<i>90 to 92%</i>
<i>B plus</i>	<i>516 to 534</i>	<i>86 to 89 %</i>
<i>B</i>	<i>498 to 510</i>	<i>83 to 85%</i>
<i>B minus</i>	<i>480 to 492</i>	<i>80 to 82%</i>
<i>C plus</i>	<i>456 to 474</i>	<i>76 to 79%</i>
<i>C</i>	<i>438 to 450</i>	<i>73 to 75%</i>
<i>C minus</i>	<i>420 to 432</i>	<i>70 to 72%</i>
<i>D plus</i>	<i>396 to 414</i>	<i>66 to 69%</i>
<i>D</i>	<i>378 to 390</i>	<i>63 to 65%</i>
<i>D minus</i>	<i>360 to 372</i>	<i>60 to 62%</i>

### Grading Information for GE

Middle Eastern Traditions is an upper division G.E. course. It has a significant amount of reading and writing. Passage of the Writing Skills Test (WST) or ENGL/LLD 100A with a C or better (C- not accepted), and completion of Core General Education are prerequisite to all SJSU Studies courses. Completion of, or co-registration in, 100W is strongly recommended. A minimum aggregate GPA of 2.0 in GE Areas R, S, & V shall be required of all students.

### Classroom Protocol

This class is conducted online via Zoom. I expect you all to have your cameras on. If for some reason you absolutely cannot have your camera on during class, please reach out to me and I will make accommodations. Attendance puts you in good standing to earn participation credit. Cell phones must be silenced and put away during class.

### Recording Zoom Classes

This course or portions of this course will be recorded for instructional or educational purposes. The recordings will only be shared with students enrolled in the class through Canvas. The recordings will be deleted at the end of the semester. If, however, you would prefer to remain anonymous during these recordings, then please speak with the instructor about possible accommodations (e.g., temporarily turning off identifying information from the Zoom session, including student name and picture, prior to recording).

Students are not allowed to record without instructor permission

Students are prohibited from recording class activities (including class lectures, office hours, advising sessions, etc.), distributing class recordings, or posting class recordings. Materials created by the instructor for the course (syllabi, lectures and lecture notes, presentations, etc.) are copyrighted by the instructor. This university policy (S12-7) is in place to protect the privacy of students in the course, as well as to maintain academic integrity through reducing the instances of cheating. Students who record, distribute, or post these materials will be referred to the Student Conduct and Ethical Development office. Unauthorized recording may violate university and state law. It is the responsibility of students that require special accommodations or assistive technology due to a disability to notify the instructor.

**University Policies**

Per University Policy S16-9 (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant information to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. is available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/> . Make sure to visit this page, review and be familiar with these university policies and resources.

# RELS – 145/Middle East Traditions, Fall 2020, Course Schedule

## Course Schedule

Week	Date	Readings, Assignments, In-class Activities
1	AUG 20	<p>Basics: What are the humanities and why are they important?</p> <p>THURSDAY –</p> <p>Class overview, in-class listening and discussion of Mark Slouka, “Dehumanized”</p> <p><a href="https://www.ttbook.org/interview/what-happens-when-math-and-science-rule-school">https://www.ttbook.org/interview/what-happens-when-math-and-science-rule-school</a></p> <p>Introduce yourself and say something about the humanities (due by Aug. 23 11:59 pm)</p>
2	AUG 25-27	<p>Introduction: Knowledge, Power, the Geography of the Middle East</p> <p>TUESDAY -</p> <p>Edward Said, <i>Orientalism</i>, Introduction, 1-28 (PDF Canvas)</p> <p>In-class film, “Edward Said on Orientalism”</p> <p>THURSDAY -</p> <p><i>Understanding the Contemporary Middle East</i> (hereafter UCME), Introduction and Chapter 2</p> <p>PRP 1 and Quiz 1 (due by Aug. 30 11:59 pm)</p>
3	SEPT. 1-3	<p>Early Islamic History: Muhammad and the Believers</p> <p>TUESDAY -</p> <p>Fred Donner, <i>Muhammad and the Believers: At the Origins of Islam</i> (hereafter Donner), 39-89 (PDF Canvas)</p> <p>THURSDAY -</p> <p>Primary Sources:</p> <p>“The Umma Document” (PDF Canvas)</p> <p>PRP 2 and Quiz 2 (due by Sept. 6 11:59 pm)</p>

Week	Date	Readings, Assignments, In-class Activities
		* Research Paper Abstract (due by Sept. 6 11:59 pm)
4	SEPT. 8-10	<p>The Generous Qur'an (al-Qur'an al-Karim)</p> <p>TUESDAY –</p> <p>Carl Ernst, <i>How to Read the Qur'an</i>, Introduction and Chapter 4 (PDF Canvas)</p> <p>THURSDAY -</p> <p>The Qur'an (Selections) (PDF Canvas)</p> <p>PRP 3 and Quiz 3 (due by Sept. 13 11:59 pm)</p>
5	SEPT. 15-17	<p>Hierarchies of Islamic Knowledge and Postclassical Islam</p> <p>TUESDAY –</p> <p>Elias Muhanna, “How has Islamic Orthodoxy Changed Over Time?” (PDF Canvas)</p> <p>Primary sources: Excerpts from al-Farabi, Avicenna, al-Ghazali, Ibn al-Arabi, Jalal al-Din al-Rumi, Averroes (PDF Canvas).</p> <p>THURSDAY –</p> <p>Khaled El-Rouayheb, <i>Islamic Intellectual History in the Seventeenth Century</i>, selections (PDF Canvas)</p> <p>PRP 4 and Quiz 4 (due by Sept. 20 11:59 pm)</p>
6	SEPT. 22-24	<p>The Legacies of Islamic Thought and Western Civilization I</p> <p>Jonathon Lyons, <i>House of Wisdom: How the Arabs Transformed Western Civilization</i> (hereafter, Lyons), 1-100.</p> <p>MA1 and Quiz 5 (due by Sept. 27 11:59 pm)</p>
7	Sept. 29-Oct. 1	<p>The Legacies of Islamic Thought and Western Civilization II</p> <p>Lyons, 101-202</p> <p>*MIDTERM EXAM* (due by Oct. 4 11:59 pm)</p>

Week	Date	Readings, Assignments, In-class Activities
8	OCT. 6-8	<p>The Ottoman Empire: Climate and History</p> <p>TUESDAY -</p> <p>Douglas A. Howard, <i>A History of the Ottoman Empire</i>, Chapter 2 (PDF Canvas)</p> <p>THURSDAY -</p> <p>Sam White, <i>The Climate of Rebellion in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire</i>, Introduction, Chapters 5-6 (PDF Canvas)</p> <p>PRP 5 and Quiz 6 (due by Oct. 11 11:59 pm)</p>
9	OCT. 13-15	<p>Empire and Plague in Ottoman Times</p> <p>TUESDAY -</p> <p>Nükheth Varlık, <i>Plague and Empire in the Early Modern Mediterranean World: The Ottoman Experience, 1347–1600</i>, Introduction and Chapter 6 (PDF Canvas)</p> <p>Gelvin, 158-165 (PDF Cavas)</p> <p>THURSDAY -</p> <p>Alan Mikhail, “The Nature of Plague in Late Eighteenth-Century Egypt” (PDF Canvas)</p> <p>Quiz 7 (due by Oct. 18 11:59 pm)</p>
10	OCT. 20-22	<p>The Middle East and the Challenge of European Colonialism</p> <p>TUESDAY -</p> <p>UCME, 53-80</p> <p>James Gelvin, <i>The Modern Middle East: A History</i> (hereafter, Gelvin), 72-101 (PDF Canvas)</p> <p>THURSDAY -</p> <p>Primary Sources: “Commercial Convention (Balta Liman): Britain and the Ottoman Empire;” “The Hatt-i Sharif of Gulhane;” “The Islahat Fermani;” “The d’Arcy Oil Concession,” in Gelvin. (PDF Canvas)</p>

Week	Date	Readings, Assignments, In-class Activities
		PRP 6 and Quiz 8 (due by Oct. 25 11:59 pm)
11	OCT. 27-29	<p>Politics of the Contemporary Middle East I</p> <p>TUESDAY -</p> <p>UCME, Chapter 4</p> <p>Gelvin, 158-165 (PDF Canvas)</p> <p>THURSDAY -</p> <p>Primary Sources: “Tunisia and Egypt Rebel: Dictatorship and Crony Capitalism,” (pgs. 292-298) (PDF Canvas)</p> <p>PRP 7 and Quiz 9 (due by Nov. 1 11:59 pm)</p>
12	NOV. 3-5	<p>Politics of the Contemporary Middle East II</p> <p>TUESDAY –</p> <p>UCME, Chapter 5</p> <p>Rashid Khalidi, <i>Sowing Crisis: The Cold War and American Dominance in the Middle East</i>, Chapter 5 (PDF Canvas)</p> <p>THURSDAY -</p> <p>Primary Sources: “Nationalism and Cold War Tensions: Egypt, Lebanon, Iran,” (pgs. 211-216) (PDF Canvas)</p> <p>PRP 8 and Quiz 10 (due by Nov. 8 11:59 pm)</p>
13	NOV. 10-12	<p>TUESDAY - Religion, Activism, Power</p> <p>UCME, Chapter 12</p> <p>Primary Sources: “Muhammad ‘Abduh: The Theology of Unity;” “Sayyid Qutb: Milestones;” Ali Shariati, <i>The Philosophy of History: The Story of Cain and Abel</i>,” in Gelvin. (PDF Canvas)</p> <p>THURSDAY - Literature</p> <p>UCME, Chapter 13</p> <p>Primary Source: Zakaria Tamer, <i>Tigers on the Tenth Day</i> in Gelvin. (PDF Canvas)</p>

Week	Date	Readings, Assignments, In-class Activities
		MA 2 and Quiz 11 (due by Nov. 15 11:59 pm)
14	NOV. 17-19	<p>TUESDAY – Race, Ethnicity, and the Idea of Sectarianism</p> <p>UCME, Chapter 10</p> <p>Gelvin, 101-105 (PDF Canvas)</p> <p>THURSDAY - Women and Gender</p> <p>UCME, Chapter 11</p> <p>Lila Abu-Lughod “Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others,” (PDF Canvas)</p> <p>MA 3 and Quiz 12 (due by Nov. 22 11:59 pm)</p>
15	NOV. 24-26	<p>The “War on Terror” and anti-Muslim/anti-Arab Racism</p> <p>TUESDAY –</p> <p>Evelyn Alsultany, “How Stereotypes Persist Despite Innovation in Media Representation.” (PDF Canvas)</p> <p>THURSDAY - NO CLASS THANKSGIVING</p> <p>*RESEARCH PAPER DUE* (Due by Nov. 29 11:59pm)</p>
16	DEC. 1-3	<p>Palestine-Israel</p> <p>TUESDAY -</p> <p>UCME, 379-437</p> <p>Noura Erakat, <i>Justice for Some: Law and the Question of Palestine</i>, Chapter 1 (PDF Canvas)</p> <p>Rashid Khalidi, <i>The Hundred Years’ War on Palestine: A History of Settler Colonialism and Resistance, 1917–2017</i>, Chapter 5 (PDF Canvas)</p> <p>THURSDAY -</p> <p>Primary Sources:</p>

Week	Date	Readings, Assignments, In-class Activities
		<p>“Theodore Herzl: A Solution to the Jewish Question;” Ze’ev Jabotinski, “The Iron Wall;” Peter Beinart, “I No Longer Believe in a Jewish State,” Michelle Alexander, “Time to Break the Silence on Palestine” (PDF Canvas)</p> <p>MA 4 (due by Dec. 6 11:59 pm)</p>
		<p>*FINAL EXAM* (due by Dec. 9 11:59 pm)</p>